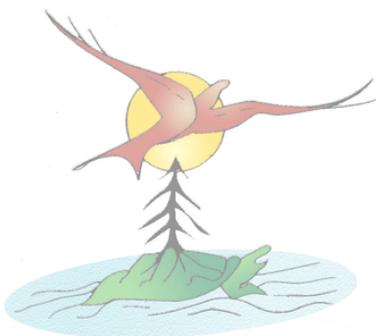


Southern First Nations Secretariat

ANNUAL REVIEW
2020 - 2021



Welcome to the 2020-2021 Annual Review



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



Shawn Plain,
Chairperson

There is no question that we are living through an unprecedented time. However, what gives me hope is the equally unprecedented commitment of SFNS and all of our partners to respond to the needs of our region.

A special mention goes out to the dedicated staff of SFNS who ensured programs and services continued to be delivered, to my fellow Board of Director members who remained responsive and fluid during this uncertain time, and last, but certainly not least, the London District Chiefs Council for continuing regional discussions and guiding instrumental activities/projects forward.

Staff and student well-being were at the forefront of Board discussions this year. It was recognized that increased levels of stress and anxiety were normal due to the ongoing pandemic. The solution was to ensure everyone took time to care for themselves. Team building activities, wellness discussions, and special projects aimed at increasing healthy well-being were critical.

Also, starting in September of 2020 SFNS conducted service engagements to inform strategic planning. We are proud of the outcome of this work:

Six (6) new Strategic Priorities:

1. Relationships
2. Communications
3. Understanding
4. Flexibility
5. Support
6. Results

New Vision: SFNS member First Nations are prosperous.

New Mission: SFNS supports member First Nations by delivering quality programs and services that improve outcomes for their membership.

Our success this year was only possible by the collaborative efforts of everyone involved. Thank you for your unwavering commitment!

Sincerely,

Shawn Plain,
Chairperson - SFNS Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE:

A Year Unlike Any Other



On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic of international concern. The world as we knew it quickly changed and we scrambled to adapt. What do we do in a pandemic? No book, class, or lived experience I had to date provided me with any clear answers. However, the one thing I knew was that we needed to keep our staff, families, and communities safe. This was our organizational messaging throughout the pandemic and it guided every decision we made. The Board of Directors were instrumental in supporting this approach and I think it's safe to say that this approach continues to serve us well.

At the heart of the pandemic is our essential workers and they continue to serve our communities with unwavering dedication. The essential staff of SFNS are without exception. In fact, the entire SFNS team pulled together to continue delivering quality programs and services in the face of this unprecedented pandemic.

SFNS persevered through this year by becoming savvy with the virtual world by mastering Zoom, Teams, and various other platforms. We implemented a Virtual Private Network which allowed staff to work from home and access SFNS' servers remotely to ensure business continuity. We developed and implemented a COVID-19 Pandemic Preparedness & Response Policy Manual for our staff & leadership and prioritized projects related to emergency response. Staff set up make shift office spaces at our kitchen tables, on our couches, and on our decks when the weather was nice. We started conducting business in a new way.

While business did not operate as usual, SFNS was able to adapt to the current

environment and continue to support and address the needs of our member communities. As a result, I am particularly proud of our team's accomplishments this year and am excited to introduce you to our Annual Review. Here's a sneak peak of the highlights from 2020-2021:

- Planned and implemented the SFNS Pandemic Preparedness & Response Support Project beginning in April 2020. The purpose of the project was to support SFNS and member First Nations in developing or updating their pandemic plans to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Inspections continued throughout the pandemic for all phases of new construction and renovations of homes. 250 new construction and 150 renovation inspections were completed.
- Ten (10) concept drawings for new building construction, house and building renovations, additions were completed. Twenty (20) drawing for handicap ramps and deck layouts were completed.
- Serviced 398 funded students throughout the academic year providing additional supports as students moved to virtual learning environments.
- Provided additional support for off-reserve Post-Secondary students through the Indigenous Community Support Fund by providing them with \$90 gift cards.
- Administered a COVID-19 allocation whereby SFNS Post-Secondary students received 3 deposits of \$500 to help support internet & Wi-Fi connections, technology/equipment, and general well-being.
- Planned, organized, and implemented the Bees & Butterflies: SFNS Mental Health Project for the region. A series of virtual workshops held over eight weeks were completed, a wellness survey completed, and 714 wellness boxes distributed.
- Formed a new partnership with Nokiiwin Tribal Council where we envisioned a new initiative with the goal to support Ontario First Nations in building financial management capacity leading to financial management success. The project is entitled the "First Nation Financial Capacity Development Initiative".
- With over 87 clients served by Employment & Training staff, we supported member First Nations in achieving a 66% result rate in employment/self-employment.

As we move into another year of service (2021-2022) we are excited about the opportunity to continue our work in partnership with our member First Nations. Without further delay, I hope you enjoy this year's publication.

Sincerely,

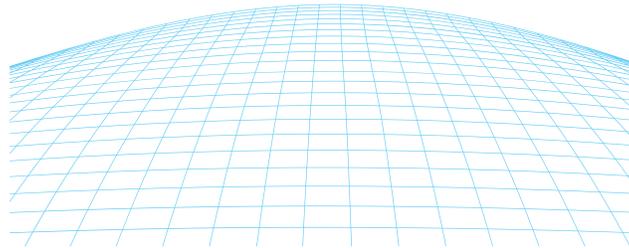
Jennifer Whiteye,
Executive Director

SFNS STRATEGIC PLAN & NEW IMPACT STATEMENTS

In September of 2020, with the support of Sisco & Associates, SFNS conducted service engagements, including:

- a social media contest among members of SFNS member First Nations communities about how SFNS programs and services have contributed to personal and community wellness;
- a survey of post-secondary students about their experience with the program, including benefits, challenges and impacts on their lives;
- a survey of SFNS member First Nation Staff to gain input on SFNS programs and services; and
- a series of virtual game shows to share information with SFNS member First Nation Staff about SFNS programs and services (Figure 1 outlines participants).

This information would inform the strategic planning process.



METHOD	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Social Media Contest	9
Online Survey	24
Virtual Game Shows	5
Strategic Planning Session #1	12
Strategic Planning Session #2	10
Total	60

Figure 4. Engagement Participants.

In February 2021 SISCO reviewed relevant SFNS documents, including the London District Chief Council (LDCC) and SFNS Board of Directors joint strategic plan, as well as SFNS impact statements, former strategic plans and staff work plans.

Two strategic planning sessions were then conducted in February and March 2021. Both sessions included our Board of Directors and Program Managers who contributed to setting strategic priorities and SMART goals for the organization.

SFNS' impact statements are highlighted below:

Vision:

SFNS member First Nations are prosperous.

Mission:

SFNS supports member First Nations by delivering programs and services that improve outcomes for their membership.

Guiding Principles:

SFNS is an organization that respects equality and diversity in the services it provides. At the SFNS we strive for excellence in all that we do and are accountable to those we serve.



The six strategic priorities (below) are depicted linearly because they are seen as a process of interdependent and consecutive priorities that support SFNS in achieving its vision across service areas. Relationships is shown at the beginning, because it represents the foundation of SFNS' work with member First Nations. Results are depicted at the end because they are tracked and measured transparently through an accountability framework consisting of annual work planning, monitoring and reviewing.

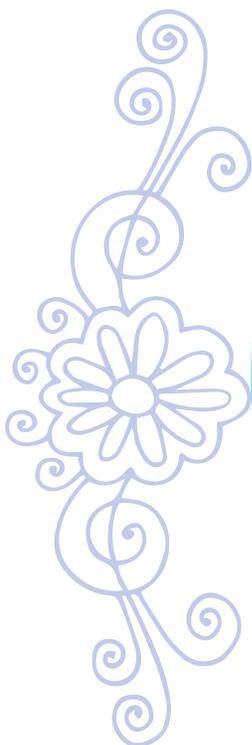
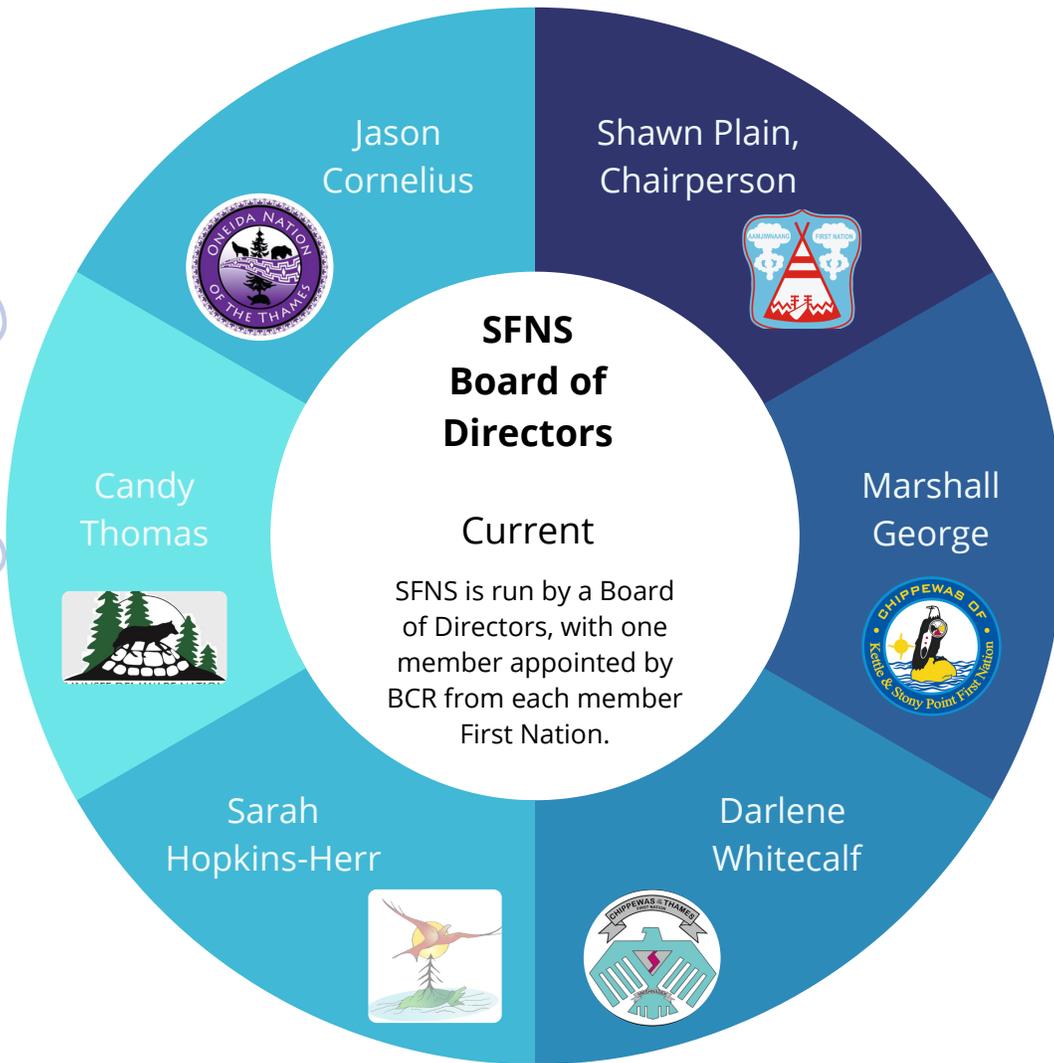


The overarching SMART goals for SFNS shown below cut across all service areas. The SMART goals specific to each service area are included in our full Strategic Plan. All SMART goals are set within a three-year timeframe (unless otherwise stated), and are based on the strategic priorities, many of which interconnect.

 <p>COMMUNICATION <i>Enhance communications with member First Nations by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintaining strong customer satisfaction focus; decreasing customer service response time; increase number and type of communications; and enhancing engagement frequency. 	 <p>UNDERSTANDING <i>Gain a better understanding of member First Nations needs by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> systematically collecting program data including client feedback; and proposing ways to address issues raised (service gaps / unmet needs) in annual work plans. 	 <p>FLEXIBILITY <i>Ensure flexibility to meet the changing needs of member First Nations by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing adaptable wellness plans; strengthening systems and processes in place to sustain business during emergency; continually implementing, monitoring & updating policies annually; and reviewing & updating remote work policies for consideration post-COVID. 	 <p>SUPPORT <i>Support member First Nations by improving outcomes for their membership by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthening financial capacity to achieve sustainability and superior performance; increasing access to education, employment and training; building strength and capacity across a range of areas including technical services; and developing a strong regional economy.
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Thank you to everyone who participated in this process – your input was valuable!

SFNS BOARD OF DIRECTORS





Tel: (519) 432-5534
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Toll free: (888) 275-4933
www.bdo.ca

BDO Canada LLP
633 Colborne Street
Suite 230
London ON
N6B 2V3

July 14, 2021

Southern First Nations Secretariat
22361 Austin Line
Bothwell ON
N0P 1C0

Dear Mrs. Whiteye

The objective of an audit is to obtain reasonable assurance whether the consolidated financial statements ("financial statements") are free of any material misstatement and it is not designed to identify matters that may be of interest to management in discharging its responsibilities. Accordingly an audit would not usually identify all such matters.

During the course of our audit of the financial statements of Southern First Nations Secretariat for the year ended March 31, 2021, we did not encounter any significant matters which we believe should be brought to your attention.

This communication is prepared solely for the information of management and is not intended for any other purposes. We accept no responsibility to a third party who uses this communication.

We would like to express our appreciation for the cooperation and assistance which we received during the course of our audit from Annette George, Samantha Noah, Jennifer Whiteye and Darlene Whitecalf.

We shall be pleased to discuss with you further any matters mentioned in this report at your convenience.

Yours truly,

P. Scott McKay, CPA, CA
Partner through a corporation
BDO Canada LLP
Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants



Independent Auditor's Report

To the members of Southern First Nations Secretariat

Opinion

We have audited the consolidated financial statements of Southern First Nations Secretariat and its subsidiaries (the Group), which comprise the consolidated statement of financial position as at March 31, 2021, the consolidated statements of operations, accumulated surplus and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the consolidated financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying consolidated financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the consolidated financial position of the Group as at March 31, 2021, and its consolidated financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian Public Sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Consolidated Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the consolidated financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Consolidated Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the consolidated financial statements in accordance with Canadian Public Sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of consolidated financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the consolidated financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Group's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Group or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Group's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Consolidated Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the consolidated financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these consolidated financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the consolidated financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Group's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Group's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the consolidated financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Group to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the consolidated financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the consolidated financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the Group to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the group audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit opinion.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants

London, Ontario
July 14, 2021

Southern First Nations Secretariat Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

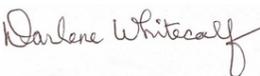
March 31	2021	2020
Financial Assets		
Cash	\$ 3,690,139	\$ -
Portfolio investments	234,866	2,734,880
Accounts receivable (Note 2)	338,970	335,819
	\$ 4,263,975	\$ 3,070,699
Liabilities		
Bank indebtedness (Note 3)	\$ -	\$ 737,110
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	1,047,499	1,006,513
Deferred revenues (Note 4)	2,004,243	228,728
Repayable funding (Note 5)	6,534	15,343
	3,058,276	1,987,694
Net Financial Assets	\$ 1,205,699	\$ 1,083,005
Non-Financial Assets		
Prepaid expenses	\$ 305,643	\$ 321,382
Accumulated Surplus	\$ 1,511,342	\$ 1,404,387

Commitments (Note 6)

On behalf of the Board:



Director



Director



Southern First Nations Secretariat Consolidated Statement of Operations

For the year ended March 31	Budget 2021	2021	2020
Revenue			
Indigenous Services Canada	\$10,159,481	\$ 9,035,963	\$ 9,064,887
Administration	29,996	72,227	144,227
Board Contribution	40,500	12,753	13,630
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	5,000	10,173	14,096
Employment and Social Development Canada	2,596,604	2,371,038	2,492,182
Community contribution (PSSSP)	608,752	252,507	791,139
Golf tournament	-	-	14,275
Ministry of Indigenous Affairs	100,000	83,048	-
Local Health Integration Network	20,000	-	160,259
Interest	30,000	27,068	83,241
Other	-	650	34,423
Rental	44,940	44,940	44,940
Tecumseh Community Development Fund	19,999	19,999	26,490
	13,655,272	11,930,366	12,883,789
Operating expenses			
Administration - Schedule 1	1,993,744	1,628,969	1,628,502
Post Secondary Program - Schedule 2	8,050,204	7,509,269	8,214,347
Post Secondary General List - Schedule 3	87,743	77,889	120,374
Indigenous Skills Employment and Training Program - Schedule 4	2,596,604	2,371,038	2,492,182
First Nations Water Training - Schedule 5	-	-	19,193
Asset Condition Reporting System - Schedule 6	-	-	92,323
First Nation Inuit Youth Employment Strategy - Schedule 7	49,349	43,630	38,464
LDCC Regional Youth Initiatives - Schedule 8	-	-	20,116
First Nations Health Policy - Schedule 9	20,000	-	160,259
Mental Health Initiatives - Schedule 10	100,000	83,048	-
Economic Leakage Phase 3 - Schedule 11	-	-	59,938
Post Secondary Northern List - Schedule 12	669,261	109,568	-
	13,566,905	11,823,411	12,845,698
Annual surplus	\$ 88,367	\$ 106,955	\$ 38,091



ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT



Support services to the member First Nations and SFNS departments includes a range of daily activities from reception services, document support and IT support to coordinating meetings and special events. Additionally, providing administrative support to the Board of Directors and the LDCC in planning and carrying out meeting logistics, ensuring quorum is met for meetings, recording meeting minutes, and direct communication through Chiefs, Councils, Council Secretaries, and Band Administrators/Director of Operation is consistent. The Administration Department receives a variety of requests from member First Nations for document and template development, historical research, information on programming, and much more.

SFNS Mandate



SFNS delivers programs and services to our member First Nations in the following areas:

Post-Secondary Funding & Support Services

Administration activities are on-going as program needs and requirements evolve. The service we provide is continuous and at a fast, steady pace throughout the year.

Economic & Capacity Development

As events and projects are flowed through the Administration department, SFNS has the capacity and support of the entire staff in order to provide professional results.

Employment & Training Support

Financial Advisory Services



Technical Services



STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNICATION

Staff regularly correspond with a diverse network including Chiefs, Council Members, Council Secretaries, Director of Operations/Band Administrators and program staff.

SFNS continually strives to improve communications to member First Nations through various means:

eNewsletter Subscribers

2228
subscribers
2020/21

eNewsletter

Published bi-monthly containing updated program and event information, job postings, Post-Secondary student highlights, news stories from our member First Nations, and so much more!

Social Media

SFNS has a Facebook, Twitter and Instagram account, which all are updated with new and relevant information.

2069
subscribers
2019/20

1829
subscribers
2018/19

SFNS Website

Updated on a regular basis and contains relevant information for our member First Nations on all the programs and services offered by SFNS.

www.sfns.on.ca

-  Southern First Nations Secretariat - SFNS
1596 Followers
-  @SFNS1992
38 Followers
-  sfns_admin
120 Followers



FINANCE DEPARTMENT

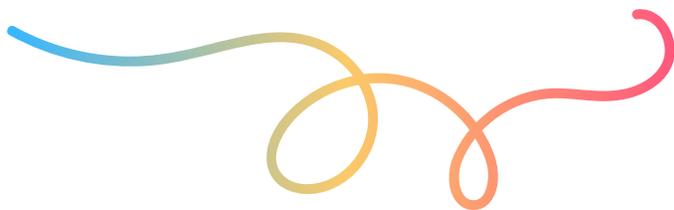


Responsibilities

Ensure money flows efficiently from funders through to member First Nations, Post-Secondary institutions and students, employees and suppliers.



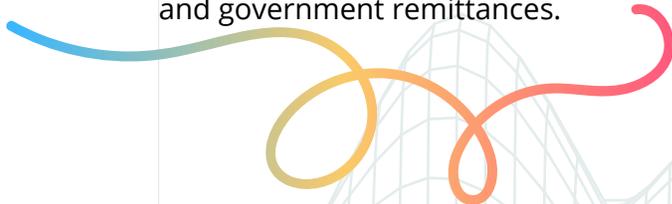
Working through the Finance Committee, ensure funds are invested appropriately



Monthly financial reports are distributed to program Managers for review.



Daily tasks including processing invoices/payments, tracking bank deposits, processing staff payroll, and submitting pension and government remittances.



Working with department managers, propose budgets for review by the Finance Committee and Board of Directors.



Prepare quarterly financial reports for review by the Finance Committee and presentation to the Board of Directors.



Implementing and enforcing internal controls and procedures.



Annual audit preparation.



Program Departments submit their draft budgets, which are assembled by the Finance Department for subsequent review by the Finance Committee and presentation to the Board of Directors for approval. Throughout the year, quarterly financial reports are prepared with particular attention paid to any variance from the budget. The important quarterly reports are finalized by the Finance Committee and presented to the Board for review.

Support Services

An addition to ongoing day to day duties, the Finance Department continues to provide support to Member Nations. Due to COVID-19, travelling to the First Nations was not possible however contact is maintained through phone and email. As in past years, we will continue to provide support in various aspects including budget development, preparing cash flow forecasts, support for the annual audit process, preparing interim financial reports, interfacing with major funders, preparing HST rebate applications and assistance with Accpac initial setups.



Finance Department

Annette George,
Finance Administrator

Samantha Noah,
Finance Officer



Finance Committee

Darlene Whitecalf,
Secretary/Treasurer

Jennifer Whiteye,
Executive Director

Annette George,
Finance Administrator

Annual Audit

The 2019-2020 Audit was completed by BDO. The audit report is consolidated with our for-profit company, 2047353 Ontario Inc., according to International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

Independent Auditor's Report

The function of the Independent Auditor's report is to outline the findings of the audit and provide an opinion on these findings. An unqualified opinion is best, and reflects the excellent work done by the SFNS Finance team.

The opinion of the auditor for the 2020-2021 audit states "the consolidated financial statements present fairly in all material respects, the consolidated financial position of the Group as of March 31, 2021 and its consolidated financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian Public Sector accounting standards." (BDO)



FIRST NATION FINANCIAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



Nokiiwin
TRIBAL COUNCIL



Working Together to Achieve Financial Success

Background

Nokiiwin Tribal Council and Southern First Nations Secretariat have partnered together on a new initiative with the goal to support Ontario First Nations in building financial management capacity leading to financial management success. The project is entitled the “First Nation Financial Capacity Development Initiative”.

The NTC and SFNS service 11 First Nation communities collectively representing a population of over 20,000. However, this initiative is open for participation by any of the 133 First Nations in Ontario that wants to take control of their financial management and accountability systems. By working collectively, we strive to improve financial performance and overall decision-making.

The proposal for the First Nation Financial Capacity Development Initiative was approved under the 2020-21 Professional & Institutional Development (P&ID) Program. By March 31, 2021 we were committed to:



Rolling out a series of virtual sessions to support year end preparedness (with a focus on training and reporting); and



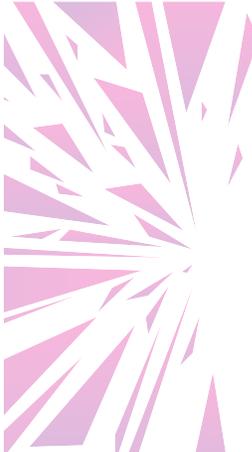
Developing a long term sustainable financial capacity development strategy that meets the needs of each First Nation community by conducting a series of focus groups with key stakeholders.



Key Accomplishments

SFNS and NTC engaged key stakeholders with the goal to develop a sustainable First Nation financial capacity development strategy based on community needs.

The purpose of the gap analysis and action plan is to:



Set the context for the need for First Nation financial capacity development.

Secure input and direction from key stakeholders.

Identify solutions that will assist First Nations achieve sound financial management.



The approach is wholistic and touches on various community needs, challenges and solutions. The results of this project go beyond financial management and encompass other key areas such as First Nation governance, management and administration.

To secure input and direction, virtual focus group sessions were held with:

Tribal Council Executive Directors
(February 16, 2021)

First Nation Finance Staff
(March 10, 2021)

First Nation Managers
(March 3, 2021)

ISC Funding Services Officers
(March 23, 2021)

First Nation Auditors
(March 24, 2021)

**These sessions were facilitated by Don Morrison, Engagement Consultant

To provide year-end preparedness workshops, we partnered with the Indigenous Leadership Development Institute. The following 7 workshops were facilitated by Elena Kalish, CPA (CA), CAFM:

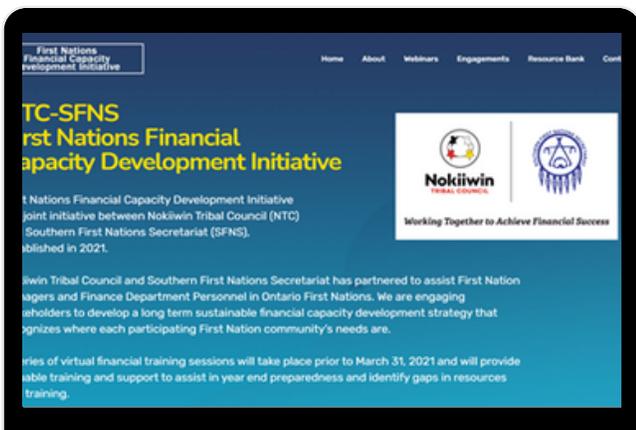


Registration Details Per Session

PARTICIPANTS

1) March 17, 2021 – Community Infrastructure Reporting	→	17
2) March 17, 2021 – Economic Development Reporting	→	13
3) March 18, 2021 – Education Reporting	→	20
4) March 18, 2021 – Indigenous Community Fund Reporting	→	22
5) March 23, 2021 – Payroll: Payroll Processes, Accruals, and Year-End	→	42
6) March 24, 2021 – How to Reconcile Accounts	→	38
7) March 25, 2021 – Opening Trial Balance: Starting with the Right Numbers	→	33

There were 175 total registered participants – approximately half of those who registered attended, however recordings and training materials were uploaded to the website with approximately ten (10) video views as of March 31, 2021.



The Capacity Connect website and new project logo were launched on March 10, 2021. The website includes: Engagement session details, upcoming webinar details and registration, and ISC fillable reporting documents. Information and resources will continue to grow in the new fiscal year.

747 Page Views
(March 10 - 31, 2021)



www.capacityconnect.on.ca

Website - Launched March 10, 2021



COMMENT SAMPLES:

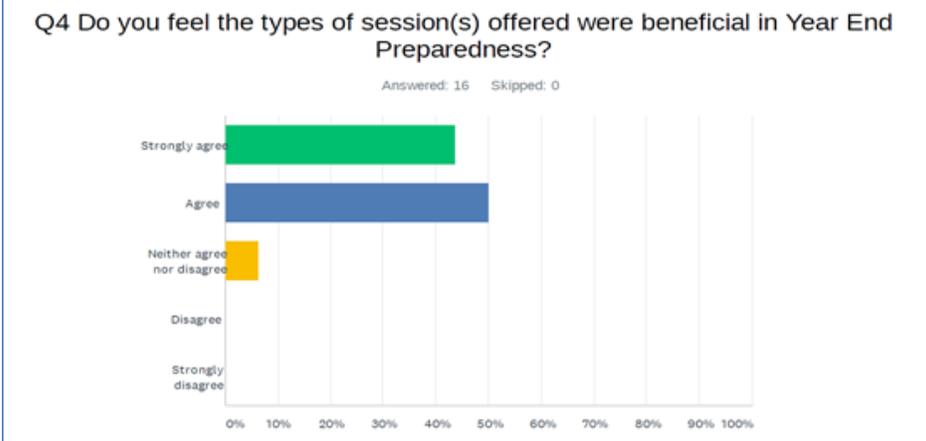
More information about audits. It was interesting about reporting unpaid vacation pay at year end to reduce surplus.

Webinars were well delivered and informative in the short time presented. Miigwech

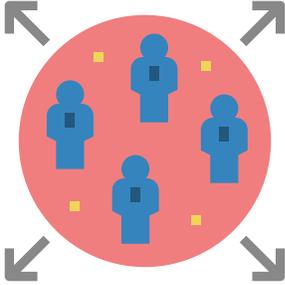
Excellent real life examples...easy to relate to. Great instructor(s)..."The Accountant"

Policies and legislation is ever changing and I would like to be a part of professional growth with this group.

COMMENT



NTC and SFNS will continue working collaboratively on this project into 2021-2022. We look forward to the next steps which include finalizing and implementing the gap analysis and action plan. If you have any questions or would like more information about this exciting initiative please reach out to:



Shantelle Graham,
 Finance Capacity Development Coordinator
 Nokiiwin Tribal Council
 Email: capacity@nokiiwin.com
 Office: (807) 474-4230



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT/ WORKSHOP SUMMARY

WSPS – Workplace Mental Health: Manager Session

January 19, 2021 & February 11, 2021

Managers today, need to know how to support their employees who may be dealing with a mental health concern. When not addressed properly, the risk to your organization can be costly. Increased absenteeism, turnover, disability claims, poor productivity, and disengaged workers are just some of the risks that can affect your organization.

22

**PARTICIPANTS
JANUARY 19, 2021**

17

**PARTICIPANTS
FEBRUARY 11, 2021**



25

**PARTICIPANTS
FEBRUARY 2, 2021**

WSPS – Workplace Mental Health: Awareness Session

February 2, 2021 & March 23, 2021

The session focused on reducing the stigma of workplace mental health and leads into discussion on how we can begin to work towards creating both a physically and mentally safe and healthy workplace. By focusing on the 13 workplace factors outlined in the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, participants will understand the various elements that impact, both positively and negatively, their organization's workplace mental health.

12

**PARTICIPANTS
MARCH 23, 2021**



Financial Management & Audit Preparation

February 17 & 18, 2021

Participants identified prevailing best practices for financial management; strengthened their understanding of financial statements, balance sheets, budgets, income statements, cash flows, increased financial accountability, and developed efficient reporting methods.



22

PARTICIPANTS



6

PARTICIPANTS

Community Volunteer Income Tax Program

March 8 & 9, 2021

The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program was a collaboration between community organizations and the Canada Revenue Agency. Community organizations host free tax preparation clinics and arrange for volunteers to complete income tax and benefit returns for eligible individuals.

This program helps eligible individuals, who have a modest income and a simple tax situation, file their tax and benefit returns at no charge.

In order to prepare for the 2021 tax filing season, SFNS hosted a two-day virtual training workshop which was provided through the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association.



SFNS PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE SUPPORT PROJECT



Purpose

To support SFNS and member First Nations in developing or updating their pandemic plans to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to SFNS, participating SFNS member First Nations include:

1. Chippewas of the Thames First Nation
2. Chippewas of Kettle & Stony Point First Nation
3. Eelünaapéewi Lahkéewiit (Delaware Nation)
4. Munsee-Delaware Nation
5. Oneida Nation of the Thames

Timeframe

The project funding (COVID-19 FNIHB) was approved on April 21, 2020 and the project team was available through March 31, 2021.

Support Provided:

Conduct needs assessments (phone interviews, focus groups, and an online survey) to inform the plans and help member First Nations to determine how to allocate any funding (e.g. the Indigenous Community Support Fund or Infrastructure funding).

Pandemic Preparedness & Response Plan customized to SFNS and each member First Nation's needs, including community resources and policy manuals; and

Develop and share communications materials (briefings, infographics and webinars) to ensure leadership, staff, membership and community partners understand the plan and policies.

We are pleased to report that we were able to meet all of our deliverables.

Overall, member First Nations were very grateful to receive our support, but our team faced challenges with timelines due to COVID-19-related office closures that significantly delayed the project.

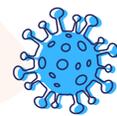
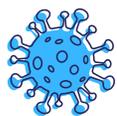
Member First Nations also chose to opt-in or out of the various supports provided as they saw fit. However, we were ultimately able to provide support for SFNS and five member First Nations, as summarized in the chart below.

In addition to the agreed upon deliverables, we created a joint plan and policy for Chippewas of the Thames and Munsee-Delaware Nation to reflect their regional approach.

	Needs Assessment	Plan & Policy Manual	Infographic & Webinar
Chippewas of Kettle & Stony Point First Nation	X	X	
Chippewas of the Thames First Nation	X	X	X
Eelūnaapéewi Lahkéewiit		X	
Munsee-Delaware Nation	X	X	X
Oneida Nation of the Thames	X	X	X
Southern First Nations Secretariat	X	X	X

We are grateful to have the opportunity to support this important work and would like to thank the SFNS and member First Nation staff who provided input, guidance and leadership for this project.

We look forward to continuing to strengthen our member First Nation’s pandemic preparedness and response during this critical time.



TECHNICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT



The Technical Services Department of the Southern First Nations Secretariat (SFNS) consists of **three (3) full-time and one (1) part-time staff**. Support services were provided by administration staff as needed.

Paul Schisler,
P.Eng. Manager of
Technical Services

Randy Doxtator,
Technical
Housing Advisor

Tim Maness,
GIS/CAD
Technologist

Francine Noah,
Technical
Administrative
Assistant

2020-2021 was a very different year due to the impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic with all SFNS Staff and the majority of our member First Nation Administration Staff transitioning from working in the office to working home or remotely for most of the year.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacts resulted in a somewhat less than normal uptake in some services offered by the SFNS Technical Services Department.

Nevertheless, 2020-2021 was a busy and productive year for the Department. The accomplishments are described below pertaining to the services that are delivered in the five (5) key areas:

1

Housing Inspection and Other Technical Advisory Services



One of the key areas of the SFNS Technical Services Department is the delivery of housing inspection and other advisory services. Our Technical Housing Advisor provides inspection services to SFNS's member First Nations on a daily basis. The work includes:

- Inspections provided through all phases of new construction and renovations of homes including preparing scopes of work, estimates and reviewing contractor's quotations. Approximately 250 inspections were completed for new house construction and 150 inspections were completed for renovations activities completed during the year.
- Providing advice to Housing Departments and homeowners on existing homes requiring renovations.
- Providing advice to Housing Departments on innovative construction materials, building code information, design, heating and ventilating, structural, etc.
- Providing advice to homeowners on the operation and maintenance of their homes.
- SFNS was in the second year of a subcontractor agreement with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to deliver Section 95 (new house) and RRAP (renovation) inspections and other technical advisory services. The Department Manager completed invoicing and other reporting to CMHC and we received \$10,200 for the services provided. This contract was renewed in April 2021 for an additional year.

Our Technical Housing Advisor continued to update his knowledge by virtually attending building code training courses, home maintenance courses, conferences and tradeshow.



Other technical advisory services provided were:

- Screening and interviewing of candidates for positions with our member First Nations. This included the hiring of one Director of Public Works.
- Paul Schisler, P.Eng. (Manager) is an elected member of the Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation (OFNTSC) Board of Directors and he virtually attended eight (8) board meetings to ensure that SFNS's member First Nations and all other Ontario First Nations receive the technical support available from the OFNTSC. Paul Schisler is was also appointed a member of the OFNTSC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) which met four (4) times in 2020-2021.

2

Construction and Capital Planning



In 2020-2021, the SFNS Technical Services Department provided support for many projects and this included preparing terms of reference for projects (scope of work), architectural concept drawings, evaluating engineering/construction tenders/proposals and providing technical advice as key members of project teams.

SOME OF THESE PROJECTS WERE:

1. A new water tower and expansion of an existing water distribution system (design completed and currently in construction phase).
2. A new cultural centre (design and community consultation underway).
3. A water feasibility study for two (2) member First Nations (both completed).
4. A feasibility study for a new school or addition to an existing school (currently underway).
5. Engineering terms of reference completed for a drainage study (completed).
6. Engineering terms of reference completed for a road re-construction project completed.
7. Assisted a member First Nation with the annual "First Nation Infrastructure Investment Plan" (FNIIP), previously called the "Five Year Capital Plan" that is required to be submitted to Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

3

Training

The SFNS Technical Services Department coordinated and provided support for training in the following areas:

- The SFNS Technical Services Department coordinates and supports member First Nation attendance in various technical training workshops, conferences and tradeshow hosted by CMHC, Canada Institute First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Conference, OFNTSC's Ontario First Nations Infrastructure Meeting etc. Due to COVID-19 pandemic impacts, there was no uptake or sponsorship requested by member First Nations, as conferences and training were either cancelled/postponed or held virtually in 2020-2021.

4

Architectural Concept Drawings/ Geographical Information System

The SFNS Technical Services Department continues to offer the services of preparing drawings in AutoCAD format and Geographical Information System (GIS) capabilities. This includes the following services on an on-going basis:

- Architectural concept drawings for new house construction, house and building renovations. Twenty (20) drawings were completed.
- Drawings for handicap ramps and utility lay-outs. Ten (10) drawings were completed.
- Utilizes GIS data for description of project area, project component definitions, and consultation and project mitigation measures for Canada Impact Assessment Act (CIAA) environmental screening assessments that are submitted to ISC. Seven (7) GIS maps were prepared.
- Shares and presents GIS data and mapping with other First Nations communities to support community planning and other initiatives (e.g. archeological studies).

5

Annual Reports

In 2020-2021, the SFNS Technical Services Department assisted our member First Nations in the completion of the following reports:

- During 2020-2021, SFNS Technical Services Department assisted three (3) member First Nations in updating the "Asset Condition Reporting System" (ACRS) reports. These reports document all of First Nations assets so that they will continue to receive funding from ISC.
- Assisted two (2) of our member First Nations in completing the "Community Infrastructure and Housing Annual Report" which is required to be submitted to ISC.
- Assisted two (2) of our member First Nations in completing the "Capital Projects Report" (Certificate of Completion) that is submitted to ISC for new construction/renovations.

Paul Schisler - Retirement

Paul Schisler announced his retirement from his role as the Technical Services Manager with SFNS in May 2021.

SFNS would like to take the opportunity to thank Paul for his many years of service and the contributions he has made to our member First Nations.



REGIONAL ECONOMIC LEAKAGE STUDY



Through the 2020 – 2021 year, the SFNS Regional Economic Leakage Project had reached significant milestones toward its overall goals.

SFNS Economic Toolkit Overview

In response to the Regional Economic Leakage Study findings, we developed the SFNS Economic Toolkit (SET), a suite of tools designed to strengthen the regional First Nations economy among SFNS First Nations by reducing economic leakage (external spending). The SET includes six tools in total for members of SFNS First Nations. Table 1 provides an overview of the user types by tool.

Table 1. SET User Types by Tool.

SET Tools	User Types
Skills & Job Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Seekers • Employers
Business Directory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract Agents • Customers • Business Owners
Business Viability Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurs

- The SFNS Skills & Job Bank is designed to support “hiring local”. The tool allows community members of SFNS member First Nations to register as candidates for job and apprenticeship positions with employers, by completing a brief profile of their skills, experience, qualifications. Community members can also search the Skills & Job Bank for job opportunities. A resume builder was also incorporated into the features of this tool.
- The SFNS Business Directory is designed to support “buying local”. The tool allows members of SFNS member First Nations who own businesses to register for the directory, which is searchable by employers looking for local suppliers and contractors.
- The SFNS Business Viability Tool is designed to support “developing local business”. The tool provides members who wish to explore entrepreneurship to test the viability of their business concept, by selecting their target market and product/service to calculate their total potential revenue and leakage recapture.

GET SET!
SFNS Economic Toolkit

ARE YOU AN INDIGENOUS OWNED BUSINESS FROM AN SFNS MEMBER FIRST NATION?

If so, the SFNS Business Directory can help you:

- Advertise your business
- Source goods and services
- Provide you the opportunity to network with other businesses

REGISTER FOR THIS FREE SERVICE TODAY AT WWW.SFNSGETSET.COM

- The SFNS [Asset Mapping Tool](#) contains the information collected when we conducted asset mapping with Knowledge Keepers and youth from each SFNS member First Nation to identify strengths/assets within each community.
- The SFNS [Cost Sharing Tool](#) to support our group purchasing committee in negotiating discounted rates with shared service providers.
- The SFNS [Capacity Development Tool](#) to be developed which will link community members to education and training opportunities.



After its launch the SET continued to be analyzed and evaluated, to improve user functionality.

With the support of TCDC's Indigenous Economic Development Funding, we were able to hold five SET workshops where we committed to training SFNS member First Nations in using the SET.

www.sfnsgset.com

SET Training Workshops

- ✓ Chippewas of the Thames SET training session (Feb 2020)
- ✓ Aamjiwnaang First Nations SET training session (July 2020)
- ✓ Eelūnaapéewi Lahkéewiit (Delaware Nation) SET training session (July 2020)
- ✓ Indigenous organizations SET training session (Sept 2020)
- ✓ Chippewas of Kettle & Stony Point First Nation SET training session (July 2020)

In addition, to bring awareness to the SET, a promotional video was created and shared through various social media platforms. Video tutorials are currently in development to assist users in navigating the tools. Promotion of the toolkit will continue through newsletters, social media and virtual presentations. The SET continues to accept new registrants in the Business Directory and Skills and Job Bank everyday.

Post-Secondary Education Collaborative

SFNS hosted a signing ceremony solidifying the partnership of the SFNS Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Collaborative on Monday, August 31st, 2020.

The event featured representatives from the SFNS, Tecumseh Community Development Corporation and the following Post-Secondary Education Institutions:



1. Fanshawe College
2. Lambton College
3. St. Clair College
4. triOS College
5. Western University
6. University of Windsor



The PSE Collaborative Signing Ceremony was live streamed on Facebook (Southern First Nations Secretariat – SFNS) and has been posted on the SFNS website (www.sfn.s.on.ca).

Jennifer Whiteye, SFNS Executive Director shared, “This is an exciting day for the Post-Secondary Education Collaborative. I know that I speak for the entire Collaborative when I say that we are committed to ensuring our students have a safe, positive, and successful post-secondary education experience. It’s now time to put our commitments to action and I can’t wait to share our successes.”

The SFNS PSE Collaborative was established in 2019 by the SFNS Economic Leakage Working Committee when the project found that SFNS’ six member First Nations spend over \$40 million externally annually on education.

The SFNS PSE Collaborative have come together with a shared commitment and responsibility to prioritize the needs and interests of aspiring, former and current PSE students who are members of SFNS First Nations through formalizing a partnership agreement. This agreement provides the framework and conditions under which the Collaborative agrees to work together toward a shared goal of supporting local First Nation PSE students.

Since August, SFNS has welcomed three more signatories to the PSE Collaborative Agreement:

7. King's University College
8. Huron University College
9. Brescia University

The PSE Collaborative met twice over the fiscal year - April 23, 2020 (cancelled due to the pandemic), July 14, 2020, and December 4, 2020. Participation from partner Post-Secondary Institutions has been very good. All meetings began with Post-Secondary Institution updates via roundtable. Over the year we developed and implemented an action planning framework that involved engagement with Post-Secondary students, research and report back to the PSE Collaborative. Early in 2021-2022 our PSE Collaborative members participated in action planning work.

Cost Sharing Circle & Business Partnership Committee



The SFNS Cost Sharing Circle have come together with the goal to purchase goods and services as a group of First Nations at a discounted rate as one strategy to reduce economic leakage (spending outside of our communities) and strengthen our regional First Nations economy in Southwestern Ontario. The Cost Sharing Circle functions as a fixed-term, working group.

The SFNS Business Partnerships Committee, have come together to develop business partnerships among our First Nations and with external businesses as one strategy to reduce economic leakage (spending outside of our communities) and strengthen our regional First Nations economy in Southwestern Ontario. The Business Partnership Committee also functions as a fixed-term working group.

Due to the overlapping interests (and members) of each group, the Cost-Sharing Circle and Business Partnership meetings are held on the same day. In fiscal year 2020-2021 we held three meetings on July 13, 2020, September 16, 2020, and December 3, 2020 (Business Partnership meeting only).

The focus of our activities over the fiscal year was Partnership Agreements to solidify our commitments to working together on shared goals:

- SFNS Cost Sharing Participation Agreement and SFNS Business Partnership Agreement were developed along with a briefing note that could be used by working group members to introduce the participation agreements within their communities (to committees and/or Chief & Council as appropriate).
- SFNS presented along with Sisco and Associates, to any committees and/or Chief & Councils that requested a presentation on the participation agreements/project. On August 27, 2020 we presented to Aamjiwnaang's Development Committee and Chief & Council members.
- Signed agreements were received from Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Kettle & Stony Point First Nation, Tecumseh Community Development Corporation, and Southern First Nations Secretariat.



In February 2021 we were excited to have received funding approval from the Community Opportunity Readiness Program (CORP) for:

- the development of a feasibility study of an Office Supplies Warehouse business partnership among SFNS' six member First Nations; and
- two group purchasing agreements among SFNS' member First Nations to share a discounted rate by purchasing products from shared suppliers in two areas of high leakage (external spend).



Office Supply Warehouse

When the original comprehensive feasibility study concept (brick-and-mortar fulfillment model office supplies warehouse) was deemed unfeasible (due to location costs and changes in the market due to COVID-19), we regrouped and explored three other options in a feasibility options analysis. The three options include:

1. A brick-and-mortar fulfillment model office supplies warehouse at another location (or leasing only 25% of the original proposed location at a discounted rate);
2. An e-commerce franchising office supplies partnership; and
3. A new e-commerce office supplies company.

Option #2 was recommended, partnering with an existing Indigenous-owned e-commerce business and developing a management company (limited partnership) jointly owned by SFNS' member First Nations to manage several franchises. The feasibility study has recommended consultation with each member First Nation's respective Chief & Council for endorsement, negotiation with the e-commerce partner and legal counsel, and the development of a detailed business plan for this option.

Group Purchasing Agreements

We also explored group purchasing with the group, and initially identified three key areas of interest, all of which reflect high leakage (external spend):

1. Office Supplies



2. Group Benefits (health & dental)



3. Accounting (audit)



In our research and consultation with the group, we found there is not a strong potential for savings without losing quality in accounting or group benefits. However, we identified LAS as a municipal group purchasing group that can provide the most significant discounted rates for the group in office supplies as well as janitorial supplies and IT equipment, which are other areas of interest identified by the group. At the same time, if the group would like to proceed with partnering with eSupply it would make most sense to purchase supplies from them to increase their sales revenue.

Next Steps:

We will be reporting back to the SFNS Business Partnerships Committee and Cost Sharing Circle to share back the findings of our second feasibility options analysis and group purchasing research and determine next steps.



ROSTER FOR MEDIATION SERVICES

SFNS continues to coordinate free alternative dispute resolution (ADR) services to our 6 member First Nations. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic our services have gone virtual. We currently have 2 active Roster Members representing 1 member First Nation, who are provided on-going support to fulfill their duties.

During the 2020-2021 reporting period we have had 5 requests inquiring about services, with 2 sessions held in the area of Child Welfare. We also hosted virtual Intermediate Mediation Training, facilitated by Red Wolf Mediation. Participants developed and exercised practical skills and techniques to mediate interpersonal disputes as a third party. They worked through case development and participated in role playing to solidify their skills. Training was held 1 day a week for 6 weeks beginning September 10, 2020. We had 14 registered with 10 participants receiving their completion certificate. The variance between registrants and actual participants was expected due to the multiple changes in dates (due to facilitator availability) and change of format (due to COVID-19).

The Roster for Mediation Services Coordinator revised and designed a new information brochure and developed a Social Media promotion plan to make this service more visible by our member First Nations. The Social Media promotion plan includes multiple graphics and a video.

ROSTER FOR MEDIATION SERVICES

WHAT IS MEDIATION?

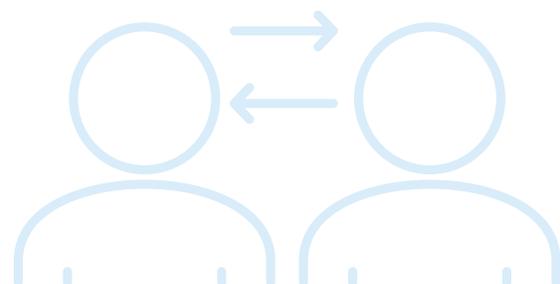
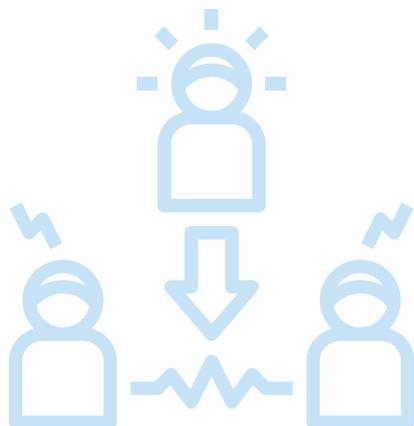
Mediation is a form of alternative dispute resolution where a neutral third-party supports individuals in disagreement, resolve conflict without the court process. It is completely voluntary. Meaning, the individuals involved are responsible for upholding their agreement with each other.

To find out if Mediation is right for you, please visit our website and reach out to the Coordinator



www.sfnson.ca
Services Coordinator:
mediation@sfnson.ca
1-800-668-2609 x277

Due to SFNS' current COVID-19 and work-from-home precautions, email is the preferred method of contact.



ROSTER FOR MEDIATION SERVICES

WHO CAN ACCESS SFNS MEDIATION SERVICES?

Any individual of our 6 Member First Nations,
Administrations,
and Chief & Councils



Aamjiwnaang
First Nation



Chippewas of
Kettle & Scory
Point First
Nation



Chippewas of
the Thames
First Nation



Eelūnaapēewii
Lahkēewit
(Delaware
Nation)



Munsee-
Delaware
Nation



Oneida Nation
of the Thames

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Portia Shipman,
Roster for Mediation Services
Coordinator
Email: mediation@sfns.on.ca
Phone No.: 519-692-5868 x 277

To find out if Mediation is
right for you, please visit
our website and reach out
to the Coordinator



www.sfns.on.ca
Services Coordinator:
mediation@sfns.on.ca
1-800-668-2609 x277

Due to SFNS' current COVID-19 and work-from-home precautions, email is the preferred method of contact.

Possible Situations To Use Mediation Services

Administrations

- Supervisor/Employee
- Employee/Employee
- Community Member/Employee
- Non-member/Employee

Councils

- Council Member/Council Member
- Service Provider/Council Member
- Consultant/Council Member

Community/Families

- Neighbour/Neighbour
- Community Member/Service Provider
- Parent/Parent
- Grandparent/Parent

LDCC ISETP DEPARTMENT



The Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program (ISETP) is the Federal government's successor strategy to the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS). For over 20 years First Nation members have counted on these programs in their communities to provide training, skill development and employment opportunities.

ISETP is a new ten year First Nations distinct program that came into effect on April 1, 2019 until March 31, 2029.

The ISETP purpose and objective reads as "...help close the employment and earning gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people," with "a stronger focus on training for higher quality, better-paying jobs rather than rapid re-employment," as well as assisting "clients to gain greater skills and find jobs that will support their long-term career success."



The goals of the ISETP are:

- (a) to support First Nations in developing employment skills by pursuing training for employment and long-term careers, and by recognizing their unique needs, with the ultimate objective of closing the employment, earning and skills gap between First Nations and non-Indigenous people; and
- (b) to support and enhance capacity of First Nations service delivery organizations and structures to customize culturally appropriate services to support their clients throughout the employment continuum by developing and improving skills and employment training.

ISETP Funding Agreement – April 1, 2019

There are currently 5 Sub-agreements held with the following member First Nations:

Aamjiwnaang First Nation

Chippewas of the Thames First Nation

Chippewas of Kettle & Stony Point First Nation

Eelūnaapéwi Lahkéewiit
Delaware Nation – Moravian of the Thames

Munsee-Delaware Nation



The LDCC ISETP department is responsible for overseeing the activities of the Sub-Agreement holders and ensuring that activities are in compliance with the main agreement held with Canada. We provide support to each member Nation to ensure efficient and effective programming.

Minimum Levels of Service

Often referred to as “soft services”, Employment & Training offices are open to provide minimum levels of services to all clientele. Minimum levels of service are defined in the following two categories and do not incur a financial cost: Drop-in Clients and Service Needs Assessment. Over the 2020-2021 fiscal year Employment & Training staff have assisted approximately 25 clients per quarter with these types of services. Some examples of soft services are resume writing, interview skills, access to computers and internet, and access to resources and job boards.

For clients who require more than the minimum levels of service, an Employment & Training staff member would undertake a client/needs assessment, creating an Employment Action Plan. The client’s Employment Action Plan determines what training program is suitable.

The LDCC ISETP has seven programs designed to assist clients:

Indigenous Skills Training Option

Indigenous Employee Skills Enhancement

Indigenous Job Creation Partnership

Indigenous Labour Force Promotion Option

Indigenous Business Incentive Program

Indigenous Summer Student Employment

Indigenous New Start Program



Results

Over the last year, there were 87 clients served within our five member communities. 66% of these interventions resulted in employment/self-employment, 8% resulted in a client returning to school and 26% were ongoing into the next fiscal or more employable.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, activities were a bit reduced this fiscal as the health and safety of staff resulted in office closures across our communities and at SFNS.

The Employment & Training staff are to be commended for their flexibility and professionalism to ensure clients were able to continue on with their interventions. Staff provided all necessary supports to clients such as assisting with transition to online training, providing PPE and computer labs were accessible while ensuring COVID-19 protocols were adhered to.

This support and results demonstrate the dedication of each E&T staff.

BEES & BUTTERFLIES: SFNS MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT



In March 2021, SFNS was pleased to introduce a mental health project for:

- Member First Nations staff (including SFNS staff), which total over 650 employees across six member First Nations (and one organization); and
- First Nations Post-Secondary Students, which total over 300, (including General List and Northern students).

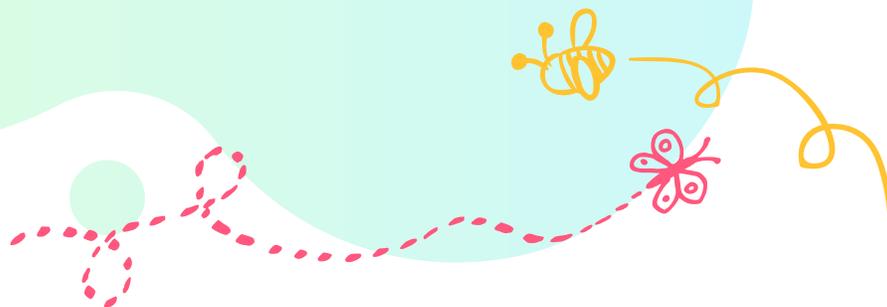
The intention of the Bees and Butterflies project was to provide participants with an opportunity to increase their self-awareness, strengthen their personal wellness, and support the development of a healthy mind. SFNS recognizes that mental wellness tools are needed to replenish and refresh so that work in the community and learning can continue. As such, we were pleased to implement this project with the support of funding from Mental Health and Addictions Funding for COVID-19 Support Program through the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs.

Michele Hopkins joined the SFNS team as Mental Health Coordinator to oversee this project from March 1, 2021 to June 11, 2021.

SFNS focused our work on three areas:

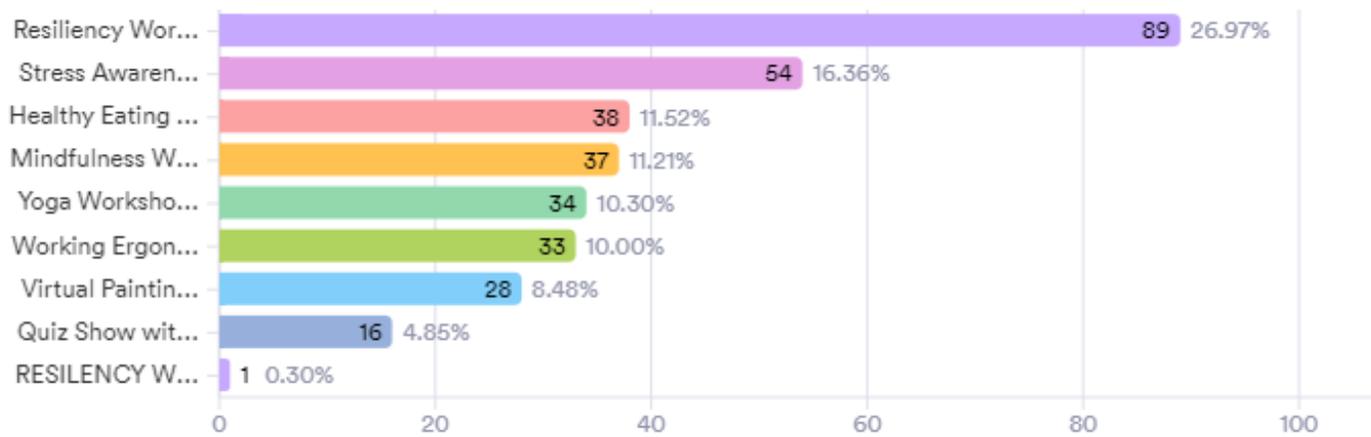
1. A series of virtual **workshops** held over eight weeks were completed. A combination of Indigenous and local facilitators provided resources, information and tips to ensure staff and post-secondary students had the opportunity to replenish, refresh and preserve throughout this pandemic. The eight virtual workshop topics were:

- Resiliency
- Quiz Show Trivia
- Virtual Painting
- Healthy Eating
- Stress Awareness
- Yoga Workshop
- Working Ergonomically
- Mindfulness Workshop



Each virtual workshop focused on increasing mental wellness by offering tips and tools that could be applied to both the individual's personal and professional life. Workshops were offered three different days and times which provided flexibility for participants to join as their demanding schedules permitted. Some participants joined a workshop of interest 2 to 3 times during that week. A Dropbox folder of workshop resources and a recording of one session each week was developed. This information was shared with our member First Nations upon project close-out.

The charts below depict participation in the eight workshops that had a total of 329 participants:



Data	Quantity	%
Resiliency Workshop with Sandy Boucher	89	26.97%
Stress Awareness Workshop with Amy Bomber...	54	16.36%
Healthy Eating Workshop with Lori Synder, He...	38	11.52%
Mindfulness Workshop with Author Brendan B...	37	11.21%
Yoga Workshop (chair) with Crystal	34	10.30%
Working Ergonomically Workshop with Dr. Jod...	33	10.00%
Virtual Painting Workshop with Artist John Wil...	28	8.48%
Quiz Show with Ryan Smith Founder of Quiz S...	16	4.85%
RESILENCY WORKSHOP BY SANDY BOUCHER	1	0.30%

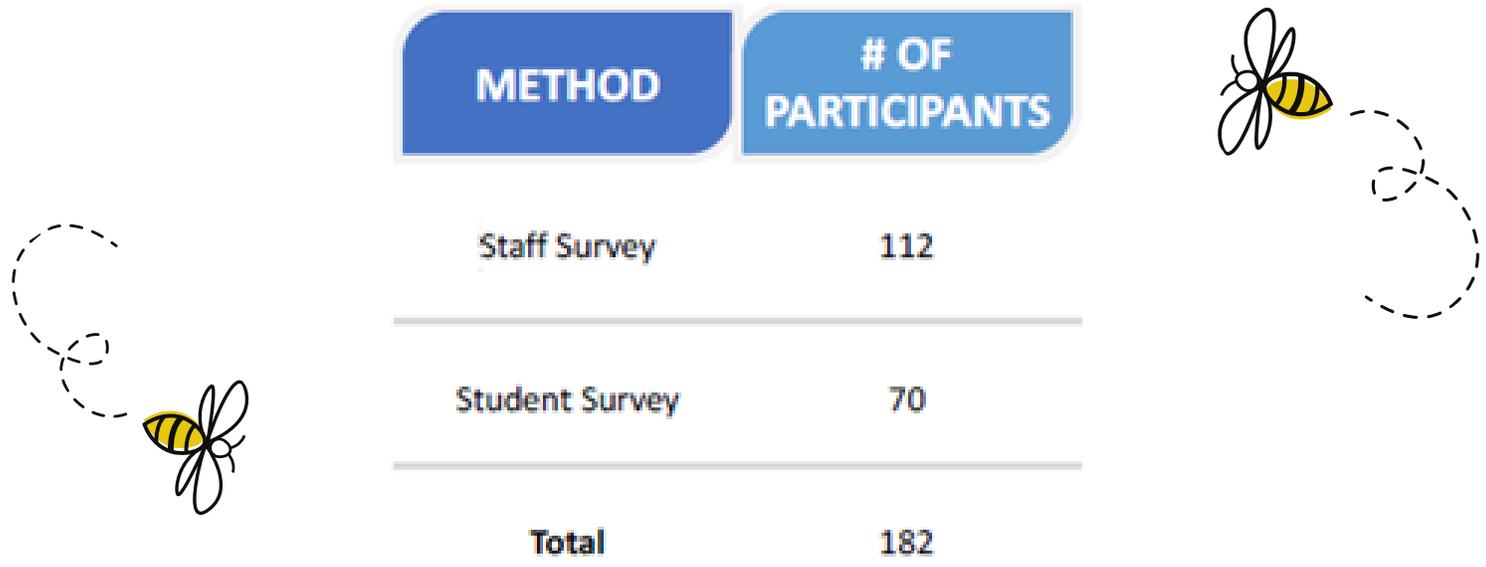
2. Rolling out of two wellness surveys with the purpose of:

- Understand the wellness concerns, priorities and support needs of SFNS post-secondary students and SFNS member First Nation Staff.
- To develop wellness action plans for both SFNS' post-secondary program and SFNS' member First Nations to better support SFNS post-secondary students and member First Nation staff with their wellness, respectively.

An online wellness survey of SFNS post-secondary students and SFNS member First Nation staff was conducted. The Mental Health Survey was distributed electronically utilizing SFNS' various networks including direct correspondence to each member First Nation administration; via social media; through Constant Contact (email software) and to the participants of the virtual mental health workshops. The full results of these engagements are summarized in the key findings of the "Wellness Briefing" and have been used to inform the action plans. Below is a summary of participation and recommendations resulting from this work.

Participation

In total, 182 members participated in the engagement process as outlined in the following chart:



METHOD	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Staff Survey	112
Student Survey	70
Total	182

Recommendations for SFNS First Nation Staff:

- Provide workplace wellness training to employers and lateral kindness training to employees.
- Offer regular check ins to staff and keep an open dialogue around wellness and mental health.
- Offer cultural supports, including access to Elders, medicines and ceremony.
- Plan a staff wellness or recognition event when Covid-19 protocols allow to reconnect and promote team building.

Recommendations for SFNS Post-Secondary Program:

- Offer virtual office hours for counsellors to meet with students, and virtual meetings for students to meet with each other.
- Email students to offer supports, wellness check-ins and encourage them to look into what is offered at their place of learning.
- Offer a student workshop twice per semester on healthy eating, mental health, and cultural teachings.

3. Offer **wellness boxes** to participants.

Wellness Boxes were distributed by porch drop off and mail delivery for workshop participants and post-secondary students. Wellness Boxes were designed to promote tools and resources for mental wellness and mental health awareness.

The following is a breakdown of the 714 wellness boxes distributed:

- Post-Secondary Students – 286
- First Nation Staff (workshop participants) – 167
- First Nation Health Staff – 261



Comments From Participants:



“Thank you so very much for the gift box I received in the mail earlier this week. It is packed with so many wonderful gems!”

“It was such a pleasure to participate in your mental health and care, Bees and Butterflies Project workshops.”

“Nyá:wen for this opportunity. We send our sincere appreciation to the Southern First Nations Secretariat for supporting our small, Indigenous Women Owned business. With Gratitude...”

“Thank you so much! I look forward to receiving the wellness box!”

“Hello, chi-miigwech for selecting me for a wellness gift box, that is wonderful.”

“Thank you again for the opportunity to concentrate on the self care required to “keep keeping on””

“What an awesome way to recognize others during a difficult time.”

“Thanks again! Have a great day and stay safe 😊”

“I just received a package from SFNS called the Bees & Butterflies Project (a mental health project) and it is such a lovely gift!”



SFNS was extremely grateful to implement this project and we hope that these activities were a true compliment to any mental health activities that member First Nations have initiated. This project officially wrapped up at the end of May 2021.

LDCC FIRST NATION

HEALTH POLICY UPDATE

Summary:

A large portion of our work efforts have been dedicated to administrative promotion of the First Nation Health Declaration and Policy. Messaging has been broadly shared with health service providers and developing Ontario Health Teams about the importance of building positive and collaborative working relationships with First Nations. We have consistently been emphasizing the sovereign nature/status of First Nations as a foundational understanding as a precursor to building these relationships.

During this year, we have not been able to hold regular meetings with the Technical Team due to not wanting to overburden the First Nation Health Directors or staff during the pandemic response. However, we have been participating in the local Indigenous Health Planning Committees (formerly the LHIN tables), whereby most of the First Nation Health Directors and staff attend, to provide regular updates on the policy.

Project Addition:

In March 2021, we were asked by the Indigenous Health Planning Committee to include a Land Acknowledgement to the policy. The goal is to have the policy and land acknowledgment done by end of August and have the policy and land acknowledgment ready to be presented to Chief and Council in September-November 2021.

This project includes:

Phase 1 - Hired a historical and treaty specialist- Monica Virtue.

Phase 2 - Collection of other local and regional land acknowledgment statements and best practices. Complete but will add additional land acknowledgments as we come across them.

Phase 3 - Compiling historical and treaty documents. Currently in the process of condensing the findings. The research will be included within the policy to support further learning of the land acknowledgement. In development.

Phase 4 - Recruiting community members to participate on the committee to develop the land acknowledgment statement (approximately 3 meetings).

Policy Promotion & Socialization

As indicated above a large part of the year has been directed at familiarizing health care providers and leaders with the importance of including First Nation communities in the co-creation of new health care systems. The following is an overview of the meetings to share information about the policy:

Hospitals

- 2 presentations to the London Health Sciences senior leadership team and the Indigenous patient navigator team. The senior leaders of this hospital have indicated they look forward to the policy and will be utilizing it as a way of building better relationships with local First Nations.
- 1 presentation to the Bluewater Health Indigenous Patient Team to discuss decolonizing data methods.



Indigenous Health Planning Committees

- 8 meetings with the Indigenous Health Planning Committee (formerly the ESC LHIN).
- 3 meetings with the Indigenous Health Committee (formerly the SW HIN).

These meetings focused on providing updates on the policy and our promotion efforts.



First Nation Technical Team

- 3 meetings with the Team have occurred.

These meetings have been focused on discussion of the Land Acknowledgment project, governance model and discussion of implementation.

Ontario Health Teams

- 1 meeting with the advisor helping to write the Windsor Ontario Health Team application.
- 9 meetings with the Western Ontario Health Lead (to be renamed Middlesex-London Ontario Health Team). Of these, five meetings have included local First Nation communities. Beginning at the end July, bi-weekly meetings between the communities and the OTH Lead will be occurring.
- 1 presentation with the Western Ontario Health Team Steering Committee and have received an agreement in principle to adopt the policy as a framework for building positive relationships with local First Nation communities.
- 2 meetings with the Chatham Ontario Health Lead.
- 1 presentation to the Chatham Ontario Health Steering Committee. Further discussions are being planned for how to move forward on supporting the First Nation Policy.

Ontario Health Leaders

- 9 meetings with Ontario Health Staff to strategize and promote the First Nation Policy amongst the health care providers.
- 1 meeting with the Indigenous Engagement Policy Advisor to share information about the policy.
- 1 presentation to the Indigenous Leads Network to share information about the policy. Ministry of Health representative attended the meeting and requested once the policy is complete if it can be shared as a model of engagement with other Ontario Health Teams.
- 2 presentations to the Ontario West Interim Director to share information about the policy and advocate for resourcing to support the implementation of the policy.
- 2 meetings with the consultant developing the Western Ontario Health Indigenous Leads Positions. Shared information about the policy and provided direction on governance and accountability to the communities and leadership tables.

Correspondence:

Throughout the past year, we have created the following information for sharing and distribution to health care providers to inform them about the First Nation Health Policy:

- LDCC Letter to Health Minister Elliot
- Key messages for Ontario Health Teams
- Executive Summary of the First Nation Health Policy
- Presentations to the above groups
- Key Note address at the Indigenous Mental Health Conference



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POST-SECONDARY DEPARTMENT

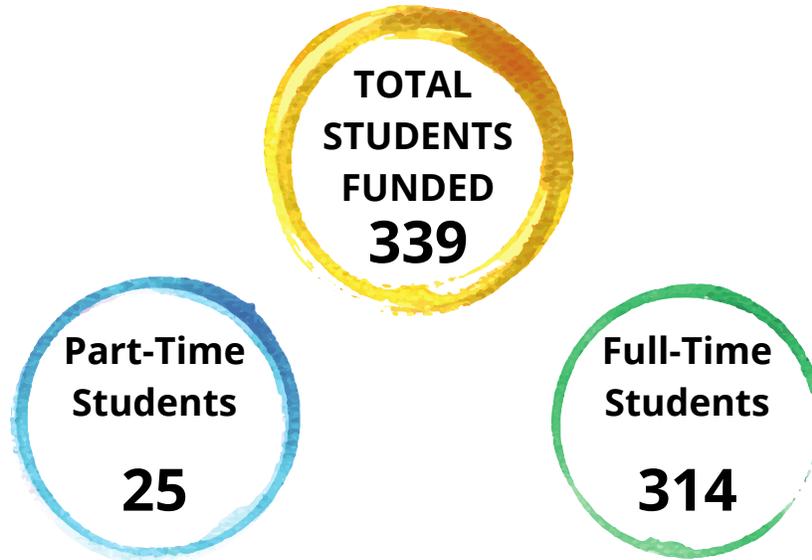


The staff of the Post-Secondary department would like to congratulate all 2020-2021 students and graduates on the completion of another year.

This year the COVID-19 Pandemic forced colleges and universities to close their doors and pushed their students into online learning. An adjustment for our students. Thankfully, with the support of many people, most students were able to continue with their studies and remote learning. It was also the second year of no in-person graduation ceremonies. Many schools made the best of the situation and hosted online events to celebrate student accomplishments.

The pandemic has also altered every aspect of office life for the staff of the post-secondary department. It has been an adjustment, but interesting maintaining connections using new platforms. We are looking forward to being back in the office and on campus meeting with students.

Post-Secondary Numbers



COVID-19 Financial Supports:

398

(Includes 59 Winter 2020 students who did not attend 20-21)

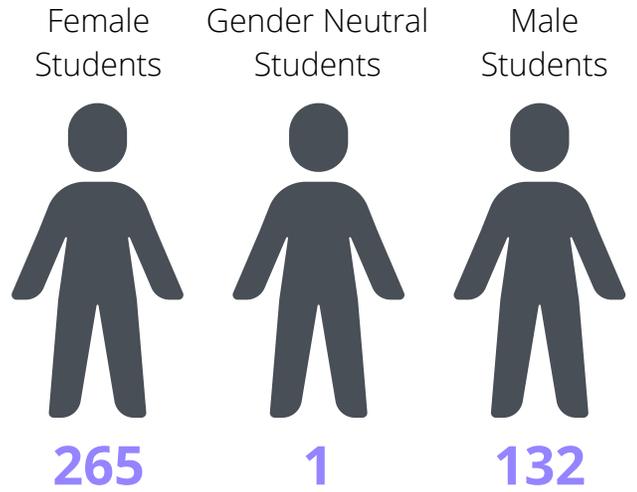
Indigenous Community Support Fund
- Urban Students:

165

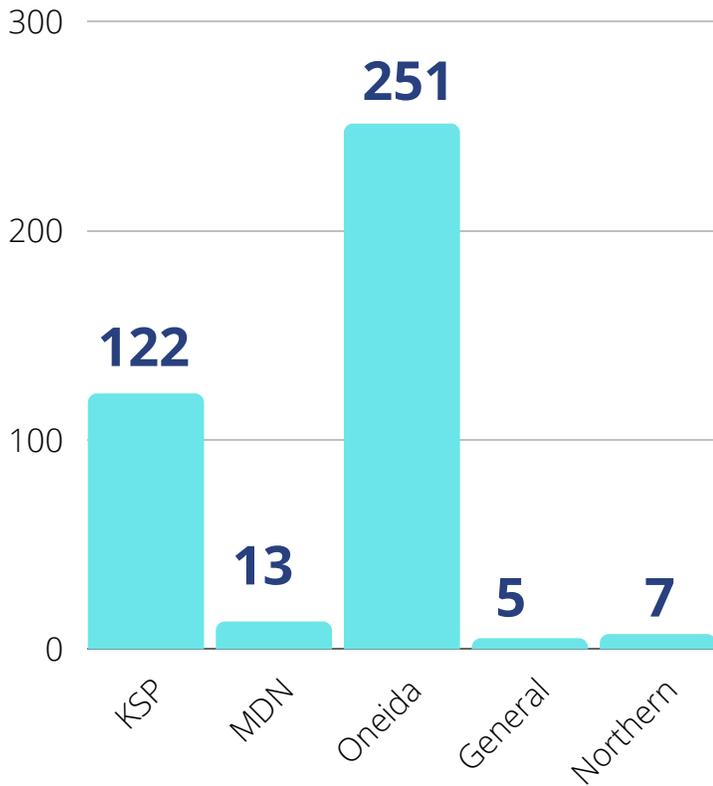
Based on address on original application.
\$90 gift card emailed to students.



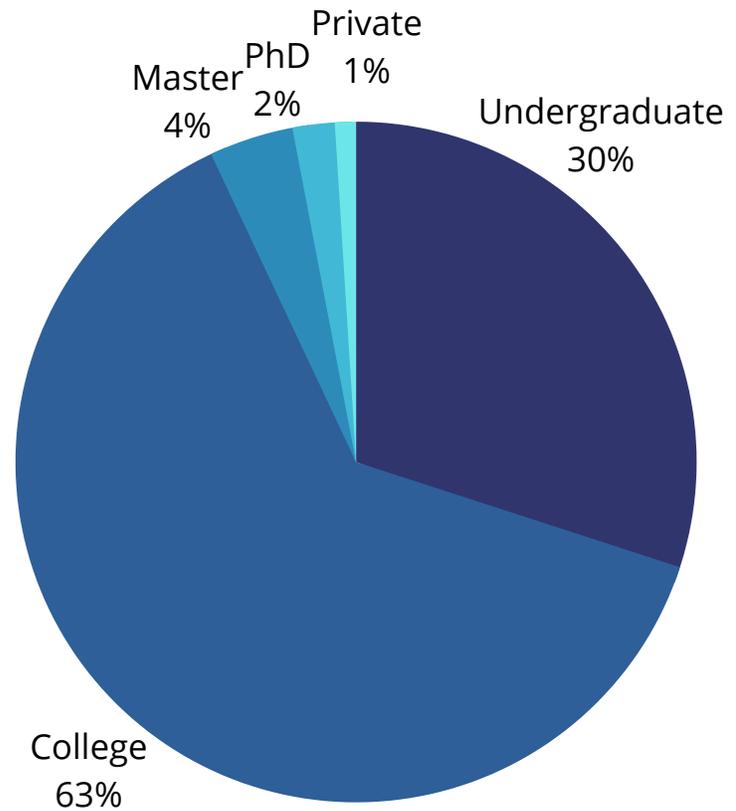
Congratulations



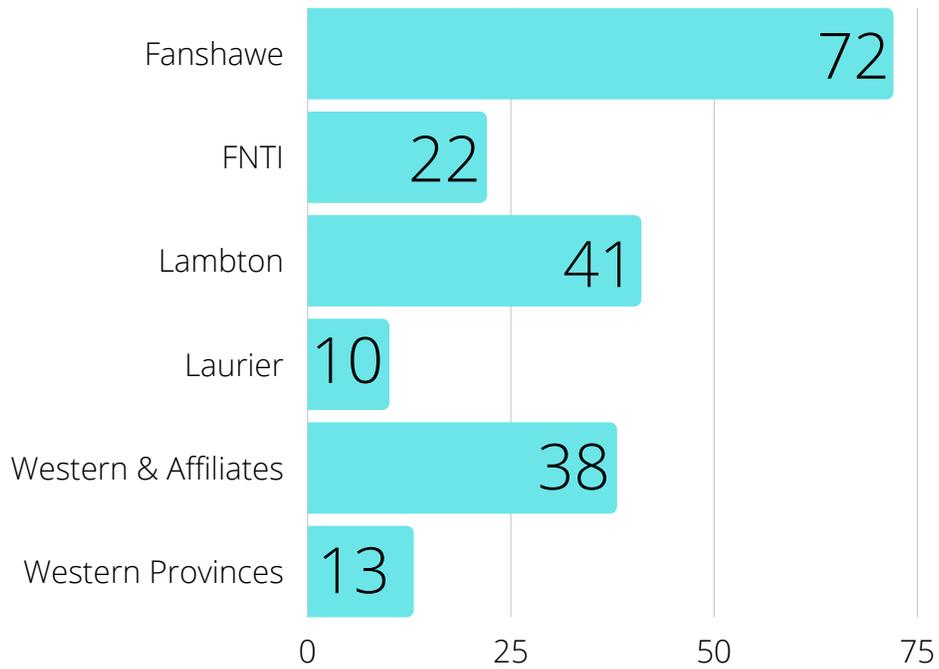
Funded Students Per Nation



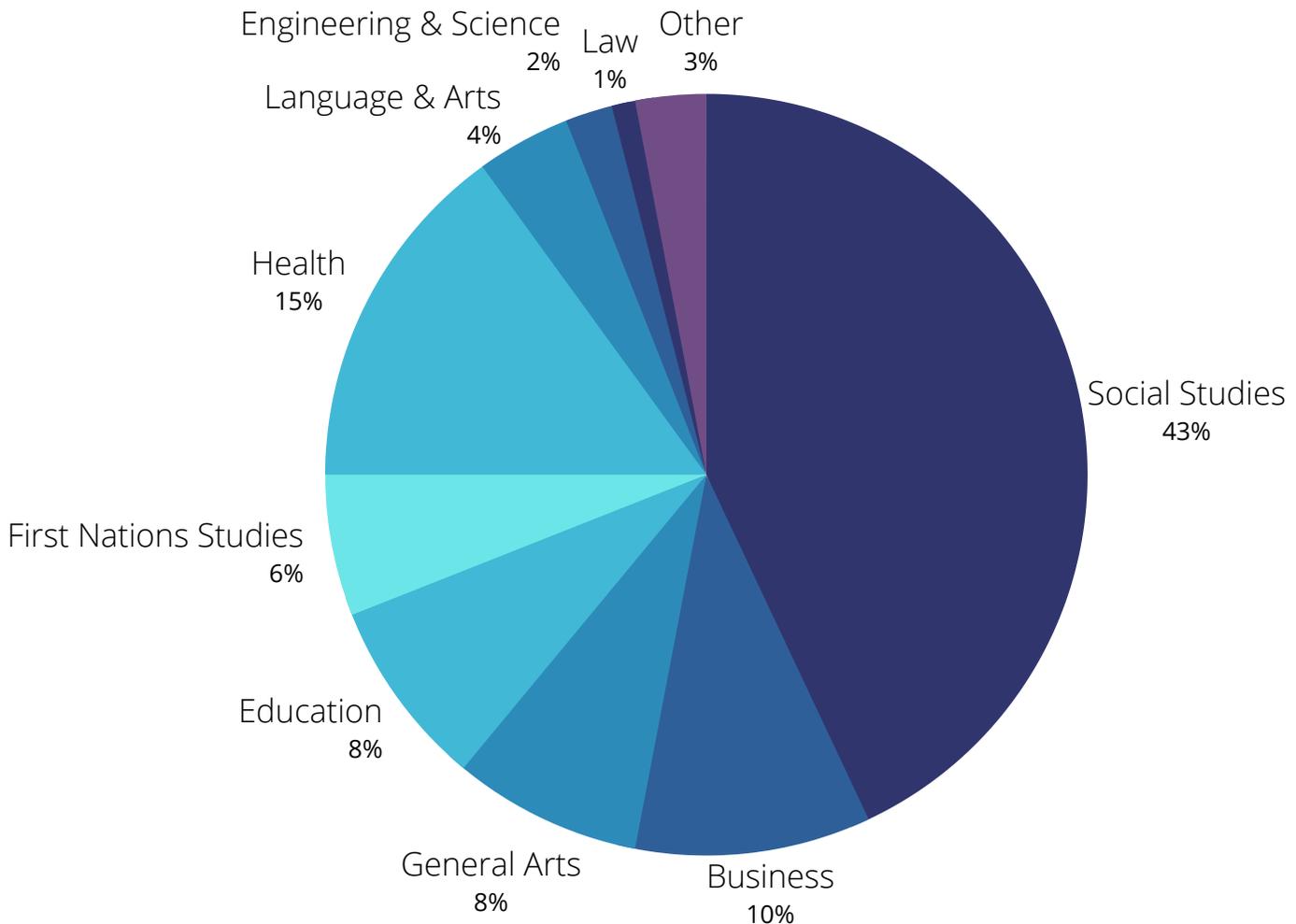
Level of Studies



Schools with Highest Attendance



What Are We Studying?



COVID-19 & Student Experience

- Most students completed the school year in remote learning.
- Synchronous (live) and Asynchronous (recorded) learning
- Indigenous Community Support Fund Proposal (off reserve) 165 students received a \$90 gift card.
- SFNS received confirmation of a COVID-19 allocation (all students) received 3 deposits of \$500 to help support internet & wifi connections, technology/equipment, and general well-being
- Counsellors maintained a connection with students through email, text, social media platforms, and phone calls.
- Some students struggled with online learning and some adjusted well and prefer this delivery method.
- “Covid-19 and Learning” survey is being drafted to measure retention, satisfaction, barriers, internet connectivity/equipment and mental health
- The changes the virus has caused may be here to stay. Many programs are continuing to offer online programs.

Student Stories...on COVID & Online Learning

- Term was ok. Definitely a lot to get use to, but managing.
- I didn't mind online learning, it's been an adjustment. It helped improve time management and forced me to become more organized.
- Prefer in person learning, but enjoy classes from home. It's difficult when I have questions. There's a student success facilitator available, but through email.
- I'm an In person learner. It's been hard to adjust with a loud household. Advice is to create a schedule and stick to it. No access to the community library to utilize quiet spaces is difficult.
- More time consuming, more assignments & tasks, noticed fatigue in professors, which lead to confusion with assignments, and tests. Helped to have a large desk calendar with every due date, weekly checklist, and keep up with lectures. A new learning experience!
- Fall term was challenging – process is so different then in person.
- A lot of assignments each week and it became stressful. Prof wasn't open to suggestions, and I had internet connectivity issues.
- Did not like the online term. To many assignments, quizzes, responses to readings. I have a diagnosed mental health issue so my medication was increased. Can't wait to be back in the classroom, easier to learn and absorbed information so much better.



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL GRADUATES!



GRADUATES OF 2021

(Based on grades submitted)



Chippewas of Kettle & Stony Point First Nation

Lexus Bach - Humber College
Chole Bedard - Fanshawe College
Kristin Bressette - Fanshawe College
Nicole Bowron - University of Ottawa
Mason Cloud - Conestoga College
Cameron George - Western University
Jordan George-Bonelli - Fanshawe College
Nola George - Fanshawe College
Alisha Henry - Fanshawe College
Jennifer Lisle - Brock University
Stacey Romphf - Conestoga College
Roxanne White - Wilfrid Laurier University



Munsee-Delaware Nation

Jessica Dolson - Brescia University
Shayna Duval - Fanshawe College
Alexxis Kydd - Western University
Naomi Perez - Western University
Shawnelle Blackbird-Riley - Wilfrid Laurier
University

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL GRADUATES!



GRADUATES OF 2021

(Based on grades submitted)



Oneida Nation of the Thames

Helen Abram - Western University
Idalis Antone - Central Michigan University
Joseph Antone - Fanshawe College
Tanya Antone - FNTI/Canadore College
Jessica Cady - FNTI/Canadore College
Brooke Chrisjohn - FNTI/Canadore College
Andrea Doxtator - FNTI/Canadore College
Kristin Doxtator - FNTI/Canadore College
Melissa Doxtator - FNTI/Canadore College
Sage Doxtator - University of New Mexico
Sasha Doxtator - Western University
Charmaine Elijah - FNTI/Canadore College
Adam George - Camosun College
Happy Gokey - Sault College
Keanan Heil - Mohawk College
Natalie Hill - Western University
Dakota Ireland - FNTI/Canadore College
Colleen Jamieson - Fanshawe College
Jolene Jamieson - FNTI/Canadore College
Jonathan Jamieson - Fanshawe College
Dawn Mills Antone - AEI
Alisyn Ninham - Fanshawe College

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL GRADUATES!



GRADUATES OF 2021

(Based on grades submitted)



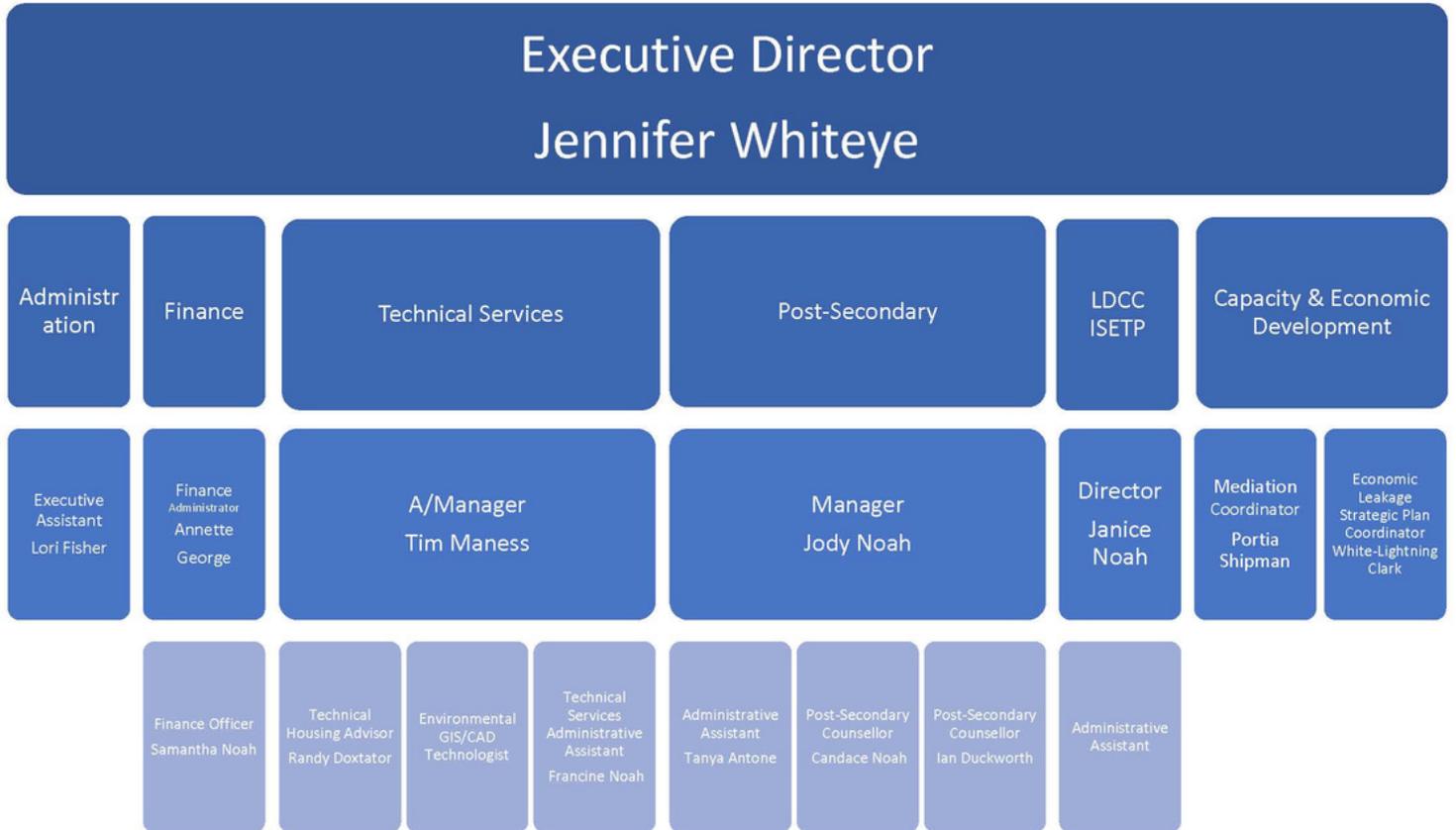
Oneida Nation of the Thames

Jean Francois Labrie - Algonquin College
Milana Paulson - FNTI/Canadore College
Dayle Petty - Yorkville University
Christi-Ann Poulette - York University
Rachel Sherwood - Fanshawe College
Tyler Summers - Fanshawe College
Jasmine Trealout Elijah - St. Clair College
Mary Viggers - York University
Shannon White - Western University
Emily Wyse - Fanshawe College

General List

Jenna Dewar - Centennial College

Organizational Chart



As of July 2, 2021

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